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Chair Rogers and Committee Members,

My name is Kristen Richards and I am a Patient Care Manager at McLaren Greater Lansing Hospital. I've had my Bachelor's in Nursing for 29 years and been in leadership for 28 of those years. I'm writing to express my opposition toward House Bills 4550-4552 and Senate Bills 334-336.

Staffing decisions should be made by nurses and hospital leaders at the clinical level and should not be limited to statewide legislative mandated ratios. As a hospital leader, I have seen firsthand the effects of the widespread nursing shortage and know that instead of a one-size-fits-all staffing mandate, we need long-term solutions that will strengthen Michigan's nursing workforce for decades to come. Tangible solutions to address the nursing shortage include:

- Joining the Nurse Licensure Compact to allow out-of-state nurses to move to and practice in Michigan immediately.
- Expanding Michigan Reconnect availability to include 4-year institutions.
- Increasing penalties for violence committed against healthcare workers.

Michigan is facing a significant challenge in filling approximately 8,500 job openings for nurses right now, and instituting a one-size-fits-all mandate requiring hospitals to hire more nurses who do not exist will have extremely detrimental effects on the services we are able to provide to patients. It will lead to prolonged waiting times, risks the closure 5,100 available hospital beds around the state, and hinders the ability of our care teams to respond to crises.

As a hospital leader, all I strive for is to make sure that our patients are receiving the care they need, and the experts who should be the ones making staffing decisions are my team members, not the state. If this legislation passes, my hospital will have to reduce operations and face catastrophic consequences.

Our job as nurses is more than just a numbers game. We work alongside families and take our education and licensure seriously to advocate for patients and our communities as a whole. I respectfully request you withdraw your support for House Bills 4550-4552 and Senate Bills 334-336 and explore alternative solutions that will better address the nursing shortages in our state while preserving the quality and accessibility of healthcare services for our residents.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen M. Richards, BSN, RN